

Shady Hill Square Landmark Designation Study Report

1, 2A, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 Shady Hill Square
and 36 Holden Street

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December 28, 1999

Re-issued on August 28, 2000 to reflect Commission vote of January 6, 2000

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Executive Summary

Shady Hill Square has important associations with the broad architectural, aesthetic, and social history of Cambridge and Massachusetts as one of a small number of innovative residential developments embodying the tenets of the Garden City movement. In Cambridge, Shady Hill Square is one of five known planned “Garden City” residential developments and along with the Larchwood subdivision (also laid out in 1915), the earliest local example of such planning. While the number of these Garden City projects statewide is unknown, the contemporaneous date of Shady Hill Square with several larger projects elsewhere in Massachusetts, and the manner in which Shady Hill Square was highlighted in the contemporary press, suggests its innovative and exceptional nature.

As an historic and architectural artifact, Shady Hill Square constitutes a unified architectural design integrated within an overall landscape and functional program that reflects the utopian ideals of the Garden City and city planning movements of the early 20th century. It is historically and architecturally significant in terms of its period and design style and its remarkable lack of change in appearance since its construction.

I. Location and Economic Status

A. Address, Parcel Number, and Zoning

Shady Hill Square consists of 12 parcels on Holden Street at the corner of Scott and Bryant streets in the Shady Hill neighborhood of Mid Cambridge. The parcels are identified on map 146A as lot numbers 65, 67, 71, 72, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, and 144. The square includes seven residential buildings located around an open, landscaped courtyard on a u-shaped access road. Of the seven dwellings, two (at 1 Shady Hill Square and 36 Holden Street) were built as single family residences; and the remaining five as double houses. The courtyard (lot 72) is owned in conjunction with the property at 4 Shady Hill Square (lot 67). The twelve properties have a combined assessed valuation of \$6,903,100.

Shady Hill Square is zoned A-2, which allows for single family occupancy, with conversion of single-family detached dwellings for two-family use (such as an accessory apartment). The A-2 zone requires a minimum lot size of 6000 square feet, and a minimum lot area per dwelling unit of 4500 square feet. The maximum allowable floor area ratio in the A-2 zone is .50; the minimum usable open space for the zone is 25% of the lot area, and the maximum allowable height is 35 feet.

Most of the parcels at Shady Hill Square do not conform to current zoning in some way: 1, 2A, 3, 6, 7, 10, and 11 Shady Hill Square and 36 Holden Street do not meet the minimum lot size; 2A, 3, 6, 7, 10 and 11 Shady Hill Square do not meet the minimum square footage for a dwelling unit, and 1, 2A, and 3 Shady Hill Square exceed the allowable floor area. Other dimensional non-conformities (setbacks, open space) are likely to exist at Shady Hill Square but were not analyzed for this report.

The open courtyard at the center of the square contains 17,399 square feet, including the access road, a private way. Exclusive of the private way, the parcel contains approximately 10,500 square feet. The open courtyard parcel, if developed as of right, appears to constitute a single building lot which could support one or perhaps two dwellings with an FAR of .50, or a total of 5,250 square feet of development. A 5,250 square foot dwelling would be substantially larger than the existing dwellings, most of which contain approximately 3,750 square feet of floor area (see Appendix A, Zoning Analysis, for further information).

B. Ownership and Occupancy

The properties at Shady Hill Square are all privately owned and owner occupied. It is not known if any of the properties contain accessory apartments.

C. Area Description

The area surrounding Shady Hill Square includes several larger institutional and multi-family uses immediately adjacent to the square, while just to the south is an extensive

area of large, late 19th-century, single-family houses. The eastern boundary lines of the property abut the Cambridge-Somerville city line on Beacon Street, a major arterial street with bus and truck as well as interurban traffic. South of the property is 10-32 Holden Green (Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley), a dense development of 26 brick dwellings in 10 small rowhouse units that was constructed for married graduate students in 1927 by the Harvard Housing Trust, a private, university-affiliated developer. Holden Green has been owned by Harvard since 1963.

The American Academy of Arts and Sciences occupies a 5.5 acre site immediately northwest of Shady Hill Square. This includes the academy's 1979 headquarters building (Kallman, McKinnell & Knowles) and landscaped, publicly-accessible grounds that are the remnant of what has historically been known as "Norton's Woods". The bulk of the Norton estate, named Shady Hill after the 1806 mansion of that name which stood at Norton's Woods until its demolition in 1955, was subdivided with restrictive covenants by the Norton family in 1889 and laid out with large house lots which became a residential enclave of distinguished Harvard professors in the years following. The neighborhood was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1986 as the Shady Hill Historic District.

D. Planning Issues

The major issue confronting Shady Hill Square is the long-term preservation of the courtyard area at the center of the development, an area intended to be and historically maintained as open space. The dissolution of the trust that originally developed the square resulted in subdivision of the original parcel in the late 1960s, and ownership of the center courtyard went with lot 67. Recent rapidly-escalating property values in Cambridge combined with a scarcity of buildable lots in the city have raised the possibility of additional construction on the courtyard lot.

In addition, 30-year covenants established in 1971 by the property's then-owners, Henry and Henriette Epstein (who purchased it from the heirs of the developers in the late 1960s) are due to expire in 2001. These covenants, which protect the unified nature of the original 1915 development and maintain visual access across the site, cannot be renewed. In the potential event of the sale of lots 67 and 72 to settle their current owner's estate, the fiduciary responsibilities of the executors could necessitate selling the courtyard for development. The uncertain status of the courtyard and the desire to see it protected as open space insofar as possible gave rise to the current landmark designation study.

As part of the study, the Historical Commission staff initiated a series of meetings with owners in the Square to identify preservation alternatives. The staff met a half dozen times with owners and Nancy Kafka, a representative of the Trust for Public Lands, to outline potential protective mechanisms available to the group of affected owners. In addition, Ms. Kafka met privately with Henriette Wenkart Epstein, the current owner of lots 67 and 72 to clarify the owner's interests and determine if the circumstances fit the mission of The Trust for Public Lands, which is to conserve open space by facilitating

land transfers from private to public or non-profit ownership. No role for The Trust for Public Lands was identified through this process and it is the current sense that the landmark designation study should proceed independently of any efforts that may be undertaken privately among owners at Shady Hill Square to protect or acquire the open space component of the property.

E. Map

II. Description

A. Type and Use

The seven buildings at Shady Hill Square constitute a unified architectural design and overall landscape program that reflects the utopian ideals of the Garden City and city planning movements of the early 20th century. While the individual buildings are simple examples of the Colonial Revival style, Shady Hill Square represents a type of development which was unique in Cambridge and innovative for its period. The square is comprised of two single-family dwellings facing Holden Street at the entrances to the development and five semi-detached double houses arranged in a U-plan around an open courtyard and access drive.

Rendered in stucco, the houses are all two-and-a-half stories in height with gable roofs and six-over-six double hung sash. While unified in materials and volume, the houses show considerable variety in plan. The single-family houses have five-bay, center entrance plans that are typical of the Colonial Revival. The double houses follow three different plans depending on their placement around the courtyard. The two houses facing into the long sides of the courtyard are six bays wide with entrances in the middle bays, while the house at the end of the courtyard is four bays wide with the entrances to the individual residences at opposite ends of the structure. The two corner houses have an offset T-plan, with cross-gabled roofs; they are entered at an interior corner and in an end wall. All of the houses have gabled dormers in the main roof plane.

The houses were built in 1915 by the Community Trust Company, a corporation formed by John E. Chatman, of Bradlee & Chatman Company, a Boston heating and ventilating engineering firm, and Charles P. Nutter, a Boston electrical engineer. John W. Ames, a Harvard-trained architect known for his work at various women's colleges, including Radcliffe and Smith, designed the houses. They were intended to provide good quality, affordable rental housing for junior faculty and professionals in a desirable neighborhood.

B. Physical Description

Shady Hill Square is a planned residential development of the early 20th-century which makes efficient use of a 17,399 square foot lot to create twelve dwelling units in seven free-standing buildings symmetrically laid out around a large courtyard that faces southwest onto Holden Street. The open space at the center of the development compensates for the somewhat constricted settings of the individual buildings. Even though each building's site is modest, the overall lot size is typical of the surrounding Shady Hill neighborhood, a subdivision developed after 1889. In the Shady Hill subdivision, lots ranged from 7,500 to 25,000 square feet, but the norm was for single-family houses on lots averaging 10,000-20,000 square feet in size.

Shady Hill Square is located at the northeastern edge of the neighborhood and backs up to Beacon Street on the Cambridge-Somerville city line, culturally and historically a major dividing point. Functionally, Shady Hill Square and an adjacent 1927 apartment

development at Holden Green (which straddles the Cambridge-Somerville line) provide a buffer between the multi-family worker's housing of Somerville and the elite single-family dwellings of Shady Hill. That buffering function is readily apparent in a high masonry wall which delineates the rear property lines of Shady Hill Square and Holden Green along Beacon Street.

Shady Hill Square's programmatic and physical orientation toward the professorial enclave of Shady Hill is further reinforced in its architecture, which emulates the style and character of the surrounding single-family houses. While each building in the development is somewhat smaller than the typical Shady Hill house, the houses in Shady Hill Square are not markedly smaller than many of the neighborhood's houses. In addition, they share with their larger neighbors features such as architect-designed Colonial Revival plans and detailing, slate roofs, wood double-hung sash, and good quality landscaping.

The landscape plan for the Square is simple, but reinforces the suburban character of the development. The access road is a rustic lane, graded but unpaved, with a stone-dust and gravel surface contained within a low curb of granite pavers; the pavers, lawn and paving were installed by the Epsteins in the 1960s; stone-dust was renewed by all the property owners in 1983 (Epstein correspondence, 8/18/1983). The open courtyard is a graded lawn, with a half dozen trees in random locations. Brick and concrete paths lead off the road to the individual dwelling units. No fences or walls separate the buildings. Over time, each property has acquired individual landscape treatments, however they are of similar character, with low ground cover, evergreens, deciduous hedges, and some flowering beds. There are a few large, mature trees within the development and some plantings are post-mature. The overall effect is naturalistic and informal.

C. Current Photographs

III. History of the Property

A. Historic Development Patterns

1. Deed History of the Parcel

The Shady Hill Square property was purchased from the heirs of Charles Eliot Norton by John E. Chatman of Swampscott and Charles R. Nutter of Malden, as trustees of the Community Trust Company on March 24, 1915 (Middlesex South Registry, book 3952, page 41). (A third shareholder, Edward N. Carpenter, owned one of the 100 shares contained in the trust and is not listed as a grantor in the deed.) The parcel was sold with two twenty-year restrictions: 1) that no three-flat apartment building be erected on the premises and 2) that no building for the use of a public garage be erected there. The 75,972-square foot property remained in the ownership of the Community Trust or its assigns until 1968, when portions of the property began to be sold to Henry D. and Henriette Epstein. The Epsteins purchased the property in two transactions from Selena M. Nutter, widow of Robert Peary Nutter, and Dolores I. Mann, as conveyed by Joseph T. Chatman, over a period of two years between 1968 and 1970 (Middlesex South Registry, book 11540, page 205; book 11939, page 433).

As part of the purchase, a series of 30-year restrictions, running from December 31, 1970 to December 31, 2000, were imposed on the property (exclusive of lots 67 and 72), among which were the following provisions:

- 1) no lot shall be used except as a residence for one or two families, each family occupying a single dwelling unit;
- 2) in no event shall any of the premises . . . be used as a rooming, lodging, or fraternity house, dormitory, commune or as a dwelling for more than three persons not within the second degree of kinship . . . ;
- 3) no fence more than two feet in height shall be constructed . . . on any lot;
- 4) no structure or portion of any structure shall be constructed . . . within the side yard areas of any lot or closer to the driveway . . . than the nearest point of the building now located on such lot (Middlesex South Registry, book 11939, page 434).

Following the completion of the Epsteins' purchase of Shady Hill Square in 1970, all of the parcels, with the exception of 4-5 Shady Hill Square and the center open space (parcels 67 and 72), which are owned by Henriette Wenkart Epstein, have been separately conveyed and owned.

2. Development History of the Parcel and Surroundings

The sale of Shady Hill Square to the Community Trust in 1915 was part of the gradual break-up of the Norton Estate which began after the death of Charles Eliot Norton in 1908. The land had been in the Norton family since 1821, as part of a 34.5-acre estate purchased by Catherine Eliot on the occasion of her marriage to Andrews Norton. The estate included a large mansion called Shady Hill, built in 1807, from which the area took its name. Shady Hill became the home of three generations of the Norton family, most

prominently of Charles Eliot Norton, Harvard's first lecturer in fine arts and a pedagogue and art historian of enormous influence.

The Norton's 34.5-acre estate was always seen by the family as having great development potential and several schemes for its subdivision were proposed over the years. While portions of the estate were sold to extended family members beginning as early as 1858, a subdivision plan was not implemented until 1889. The 1889 plan included Irving, Scott, Farrar and Holden streets and imposed strict constraints on the setbacks, type, and cost of houses to be built there. Within 20 years, the neighborhood was filled with substantial Colonial Revival and Queen Anne houses, most of them built for Harvard professors.

The northeastern section of the Norton holdings did not develop as quickly as the streets to the south, Francis and Irving. Shady Hill Square was the first construction on Holden Street, most of which was not built up until the 1920s. From 1917 to 1925, the Shady Hill Cooperative Open Air School (now the Shady Hill School) was located in a series of low wooden buildings that stood opposite the Square. After the school relocated to Coolidge Hill, Holden Street developed with simple Colonial Revival single-family houses.

Even after the construction of Shady Hill Square, much of the surrounding land, including five acres of the Norton estate around the Shady Hill mansion, remained open and, over the next 50 years, periodically attracted development schemes that many in the neighborhood found unacceptable. In 1923, the first of these, for construction of a new street with 23 building lots on land just east of Shady Hill Square, was opposed by a group of residents determined to "protect the Norton's Woods district" (OC mss, p. 15). The group, which established itself as the Shady Hill-Norton's Woods Trust, purchased the property in question and in 1926 sold it to the Harvard Housing Trust for construction of Holden Green, a development more suited to the neighborhood's character.

The Shady Hill mansion site was also proposed for more extensive development in the early 1970s. The mansion was privately owned until 1948, when its long-time owner, Professor Paul Sachs of the Fogg Art Museum, sold the house and its five acre parcel to Harvard. Harvard left the house vacant until 1955 and then demolished it, claiming no academic use could be found for the building (OC mss p 16). The loss of Shady Hill, and the sudden, unannounced manner in which it was accomplished, engendered widespread mistrust among the neighbors, who 15 years later, blocked the university's attempt to develop two 18- and 20-story apartment towers on the site.

The neighbors' efforts to preserve Norton's Woods were ultimately realized in 1978, when the site was leased to the American Academy of Arts & Sciences for its headquarters building. By the terms of the zoning decision (case 4605) allowing the variances required for the project, reasonable access and use of the Norton's Woods property by the public was made a condition of approval.

Since the Shady Hill Square buildings have been in individual ownership, six variances from applicable zoning have been granted. Three of those, for 2-3, 8-9, and 10-11 Shady Hill Square, were to enable the subdivision of the existing two-family dwellings into two single-family units. The other three variances involved construction of additions to 1, 3, and 4 Shady Hill Square.

B. Historic Photographs

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V. Significance of the Property

A. Historical Significance

In Cambridge, Shady Hill Square is a unique example of planned multi-family residential development. It most closely resembles three somewhat later projects constructed for use by Harvard students (Shaler Lane, Holden Green, and Gibson Terrace) but unlike those projects, Shady Hill Square was not intended for student housing. Likewise, it shares certain design characteristics with other early 20th-century residential developments in the city, including Gray Gardens East and West and Larchwood, but differs from those subdivisions in that Shady Hill Square was intended for multi-family rather than single family use. Predating all but one of those developments, Shady Hill Square is exactly contemporaneous with Larchwood, laid out as a “garden suburb” in 1915.

Shady Hill Square was constructed by the Community Trust Company, a development company whose stated intention, as recorded in The Cambridge Chronicle (April 24, 1915) was to create a “community”, “like . . . Plato’s, . . . but unlike the dreams of the philosophers, . . . eminently practical.” They envisioned a community comprised of “Harvard’s teaching staff, the instructors at Tech and families whose children are studying at either institution.” They made clear they were a private, non-University entity, but that the “painfully limited choice of dwellings” for Harvard instructors ensured the project’s success, for:

in the minds of those who know Cambridge there is no doubt that the community will be a success for of all men who teach, Harvard’s instructors are most in need of a roof to cover them . . . for though Harvard has listened to the cry of the undergraduate and built him palaces along the Charles, she has entirely neglected the needs of the equally worthy professor (Chronicle, 4/24/1915)

The “prime movers and principal owners” in the Community Trust Company were John E. Chatman and Charles P. Nutter, a heating contractor and an electrical engineer. Both were Harvard graduates (Chatman, 1897, Nutter, 1893) and Nutter had been for seven years an instructor in the English department. While there is no record that Shady Hill Square reflected Nutter’s own housing experiences as a young instructor, the tone of their promotional article suggests Nutter may have been speaking autobiographically, when the article spoke of instructors “obliged to spend the winter in houses with halls like those of a baronial estate, and rooms in which the largest of their classes might sit in comfort” or others who, “after a vain search for some place small enough to hold them, find themselves perched high in an apartment at the mercy of some predatory janitor (Chronicle, 4/24/1915).

The Community Trust’s plan for their development reflected the best and newest thinking about town planning and community development. In 1915, the pioneering work of early town planners in England, notably Ebenezer Howard and Raymond Unwin, was beginning to be put into practice in the U.S. The “Garden City” envisioned by these early theorists and planners, a planned, coherent community built around natural and economic

amenities and of a size and architectural character to encourage optimum social life, was being built on a small scale in the U.S. by 1900. The much larger English prototype, Letchworth Garden City, was established in 1905.

With a few notable exceptions in the U.S., the Garden City did not materialize at its intended scale but its utopian goal- to design modest, affordable communities that provided a healthful way of life where man and nature co-existed in a harmonious balance- was widely adopted across the country in the early 20th century. Garden City theories underpinned much of the effort to develop local zoning controls (which came into widespread use in the U.S. in the 1920s), established the basis of the modern planning profession, and profoundly influenced the form of the American residential suburb.

The name “Community Trust” epitomized the developers’ purpose to create, at a neighborhood scale, a community along Howard and Unwin’s precepts. A November, 1915 article in The House Beautiful magazine explicitly made that connection:

In the five double and two single houses of Shady Hill Square is included a graceful and interesting example of ‘community building.’ These houses, standing about thirty feet apart and planned especially for the domestic life of men of a studious habit (hence the large study with wide windows and an open fire under the gambrel roof) will rent at from \$600 to \$1000 [a year]; but the group is a private building enterprise in contradistinction to the individual home making that gives a more personal note of distinction to the rest of the neighborhood. Within its limits the delightful little square may remind the visitor of pictures he has seen of domestic groups in Letchworth, England or Garden City, Long Island . . . (Bergengren, p. 169)

Within Cambridge, there was only one other development being built along similar lines, the Larchwood “garden suburb.” Larchwood, developed out of the estate of John Chipman Gray on Brattle Street, was laid out in 1915 by the landscape architecture firm of Pray, Hubbard & White, proteges of the Olmsted Brothers firm and important practitioners and teachers in the field. The subdivision of 100 lots preserved as many trees as possible and included wide planting strips and landscaped islands on its curving streets. Larchwood, too, invoked the “noted garden city developments in England, among them Letchworth and Hampstead” (Chronicle, 10/2/1915).

Elsewhere in the Boston area, other experiments in the utopian tenets of the Garden City movement were being constructed at Woodbourne in Jamaica Plain (1912, Kilham, Hopkins & Greeley) and in the Billerica Garden Suburb (1914, Arthur Comey and Warren Manning). Woodbourne, with 150 houses, and Billerica, with 300, were both envisioned as enclaves of working-class housing whose “improved” architecture and picturesquely curving streets demonstrated that modest housing need not be mean or dull. A 1919 House Beautiful article on “Housing of College Faculties,” even suggested that Woodbourne was a good model for faculty housing, stating, “Where our universities have available land, they could lay out an equally attractive group of houses for the professors and their families” (Withington, p. 167).

The Shady Hill Square development also incorporated the best practices of the emerging field of landscape architecture, maintaining and enhancing, rather than replacing, the existing landscape features. The developers announced that:

Unlike the average architect's drawing, which generally depicts a paradise only in theory, the picture of the community will be true in practice. The land was once part of the Norton's Shady Hill and about thirty large shade trees are still standing, which have been saved by the builders. Thus, with the exception of planting a few shrubs about the houses, and a line of poplars along the Beacon street wall, no general landscape gardening will be needed. At the front of the grounds near Scott street there are two willows whose age probably reaches well into the hundreds. These are the monarchs of the community forest, but the other trees, for the most part elms, are also large compared to the scrawny maples that border the municipal roadside. (*Chronicle*, 4/24/1915)

The retention of many old trees in the Norton estate generally was acknowledged to contribute to the gracefulness of the neighborhood as a whole "having already a comfortable air of long residence" (Bergengren, p. 165).

While all evidence suggests that the Shady Hill Square development succeeded in solving the "housing problem which the presence of many families of refinement and comparatively small income makes inseparable from any college community" (Bergengren, p. 167), the model it provided was not widely adopted in Cambridge. The developers suggested in their promotional article that the only comparable project to their "instructors' housing" was the five-unit Tudor Revival rowhouse of 1911 at 12-20 Hilliard Street, designed by Newhall & Blevins. A much more typical solution to the housing problems of the period was the apartment building, of which many distinguished early 20th-century examples (a number designed and developed by Newhall & Blevins) exist in Cambridge.

Like the rest of the Norton's Woods neighborhood, Shady Hill Square has over the years been the residence of many distinguished academics. Among those who have lived at Shady Hill Square were Harvard president James Conant (1920s, #8), architect Robert Kennedy (1950s, #9), poet Simon Kuznets (1960s, 36 Holden), and a number of Harvard and M.I.T. professors.

B. Architectural Significance

Shady Hill Square was designed by John Worthington Ames (1871-1954), a Harvard graduate and Beaux-Arts trained architect who began his career in the office of McKim, Mead & White in New York. He practiced architecture in Boston beginning in 1898 and formed a partnership with Edwin Dodge (Ames & Dodge) in 1914. Ames had an extensive practice in residential design but was best known for his work at New England educational institutions. He designed dormitory and gymnasium buildings at Radcliffe, Smith and Bennington Colleges. In Cambridge, he designed a dozen buildings, including a number of Georgian Revival houses on Brattle Street (114, 122, 124, 142 and 144), a house at 28 Hubbard Park, the Cambridge Boat Club (1909) and two 1916 projects for

the Householders Trust at 81 and 89 Irving Street. The Brattle Street houses were all built for Cambridge developer, Giles Taintor.

Architecturally, the Shady Hill Square buildings are not unlike Ames' other Cambridge residential designs. In mass and overall form, they are similar in size, although they contained two dwelling units rather than the single family plans of most of Ames' other residential work. In design, all of Ames' Cambridge houses are carefully-detailed examples of the Georgian Revival style. Most have five-bay facades with center entrances and dormers across the roof.

The Shady Hill Square houses are somewhat more modest than Ames' single family houses, which frequently have elaborate entrance treatments. Stucco sheathing, Tuscan columns, and simple pediments and porch treatments represent a less expensive variant on the same basic elements Ames used on his single family commissions.

At Shady Hill Square, the ensemble plan is more important than the architecture of any of the individual buildings. Each of the seven structures in the development uses the same height, massing, materials and details, but the plans vary according to the position of the building on the square. The "gateway" single-family houses facing Holden Street (1 Shady Hill Square and 36 Holden, or 12 Shady Hill Square) are identical and oriented toward the rest of the "single-family" neighborhood. The two duplexes on the long sides of the Square are identical six bay structures with entrances in the middle bays. The corner houses mirror each other, while the duplex facing the short end of the Square is only four bays wide, with entrances at opposite ends. Within the overall uniformity of height, massing, and materials, Ames' plan achieves individuality and freshness.

Ames' training at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, where the skillful layout of a site was valued, served him well at Shady Hill Square, which combines simplified, Georgian Revival architecture, naturalistic Olmstedian landscape treatments, and a formal, ordered site plan. More than any individual component, it is this combination of design factors that gives Shady Hill Square its architectural significance. Although many of the old trees described in the 1915 promotional article have been lost, the Square otherwise retains all of its significant original features.

C. Historic Photographs

V. Relationship to Criteria

A. Article III, Section 2.78.180

The enabling ordinance for landmarks states:

The Historical Commission by majority vote may recommend for designation as a landmark any property within the City being or containing a place, structure, feature or object which it determines to be either (1) importantly associated with one or more historic persons or events, or with the broad architectural, aesthetic, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City or the Commonwealth or (2) historically or architecturally significant (in terms of its period, style, method of construction or association with a famous architect or builder) either by itself or in the context of a group of structures . . .

B. Relationship of Property to Criteria

Shady Hill Square is a place that appears to meet criterion (1) of the enabling ordinance for its important associations with the broad architectural, aesthetic, and social history of the City and the Commonwealth. It also appears to meet criterion (2) for its historical and architectural significance in terms of its period and style.

Shady Hill Square has important associations with the broad architectural, aesthetic, and social history of Cambridge and Massachusetts as one of a small number of innovative residential developments embodying the tenets of the Garden City movement. In Cambridge, Shady Hill Square is one of five known planned “Garden City” residential developments and along with the Larchwood subdivision (also laid out in 1915), the earliest local example of such planning. While the number of these Garden City projects statewide is unknown, the contemporaneous date of Shady Hill Square with several larger projects elsewhere in Massachusetts, and the manner in which Shady Hill Square was highlighted in the contemporary press, suggests its innovative and exceptional nature.

As an historic and architectural artifact, Shady Hill Square constitutes a unified architectural design integrated within an overall landscape and functional program that reflects the utopian ideals of the Garden City and city planning movements of the early 20th century. It is historically and architecturally significant in terms of its period and design style and its remarkable lack of change in appearance since its construction.

VI. Recommendations

A. Article III, Section 2.78.140

The purpose of landmark designation is contained in the enabling ordinance, which is to: preserve, conserve and protect the beauty and heritage of the City and to improve the quality of its environment through identification, conservation and maintenance of . . . site and structures which constitute or reflect distinctive features of the architectural, cultural, political, economic or social history of the City; to resist and restrain environmental influences adverse to this purpose; [and] to foster appropriate use and wider public knowledge and appreciation of such . . . structures . . .

B. Preservation Options

The ensemble nature of the Shady Hill Square development can be preserved through designation as a landmark under Chapter 2.78. Designation of the Square would protect the buildings, setting, and structures of the Square by requiring the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness or Hardship by the Historical Commission at a public hearing for any alteration needing a building permit and visible from the public way. Landmarking would have the effect of preserving the character of the exterior architectural features of Shady Hill Square. While long-term preservation of the buildings that comprise Shady Hill Square could be accomplished by other means (such as seeking preservation easements with common review provisions from each owner), landmark designation is the most direct and efficient means of achieving this goal.

In addition to landmarking, there are several other possible options to preserve the total ensemble of buildings and open space at Shady Hill Square. The following options focus on maintenance of the center lot (map 146A, lot 72) as an open space component of the development. These options were identified and discussed among owners as part of the Historical Commission staff's meetings with owners and the Trust for Public Land and, in most cases in conversations with Henriette Wenkart Epstein and the staff of the Commission and the Trust for Public Land.

It has been determined that, at this time, the option of developing a preservation, or possibly a conservation, easement for the open space at lot 72 is not relevant. Mrs. Epstein has indicated that the benefits of easement donation do not apply in her circumstances. Excluding easement donation, at least two other open space preservation models have been discussed. Each would require the Shady Hill Square owners to develop a more formal legal structure that would represent their shared interests.

In the first option, which is similar to the manner of ownership at Louisbourg Square in Boston, the city would purchase and own the open space which would then be maintained from a fund established by the property owners on the Square. The city is committed to acquiring open space, but in areas of Cambridge whose residents are underserved with open space (primarily Area 4, Wellington-Harrington, Cambridgeport and other central

Cambridge neighborhoods). This, as well as the anticipated cost of land in the Shady Hill neighborhood, makes public acquisition of lot 72 unlikely.

In the second open space preservation option, lot 72 would be purchased by the abutting owners and deeded in shares to those owners, similar to ownership at Montgomery Park in Boston's South End. A variant on that option would see ownership in the Square converted to a condominium form, with lot 72 owned in common. Another variant would create a "friends of Shady Hill Square" to own lot 72 in trust for the surrounding properties. In any of these scenarios, the abutting property owners would need to incorporate in some manner and either raise funds or obtain private financing to acquire lot 72. It has been recommended that the abutting property owners cooperate to obtain a thorough professional appraisal of the value of lot 72 that would establish the scope of the financing that could be required to acquire the lot.

It is hoped that a private, abutter-generated mechanism can be developed to protect lot 72 as permanent open space. It has been the Commission's procedure to work with property owners to identify appropriate and acceptable means of maximizing property value and development potential within the protective, regulatory context of landmark designation. In this case, however, it is not clear whether, or to what extent, development of lot 72 would be appropriate. Nor is it clear that a future commission, if presented with a proposal to construct a dwelling on lot 72 that was architecturally consistent and harmonious with the existing dwellings, might not find such a proposal appropriate. Thus, while landmark designation may tend to decrease the likelihood of development on lot 72, it is not clear that landmark designation would eliminate the potential for such development of the open space component of Shady Hill Square.

With regard to a possible claim that landmark designation might constitute an unlawful taking, the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia has ruled in a similar case that denial of an application to build on the lawn of a 1920s apartment building was not a taking. In that case, *District Intown Properties Limited Partnership v. District of Columbia* (23 F. Supp. 2d 30 [D.D.C. 1998]), the judge found that "the District's actions did not arise to the level of a 'categorical' or 'total taking,' within the meaning of *Lucas v. South Carolina Coastal Commission* . . . and did not result in a regulatory taking under the three-prong analysis set forth in *Penn Central Transportation Co. v. New York City*" (17 PLR 1141). Given other similarities in the circumstances of the District Intown property and Shady Hill Square, and depending on the outcome of the appeal in the District Intown case, the decision seems to offer some precedent that designation of the open space component of Shady Hill Square would not result in a taking.

C. Staff Recommendation

It is the staff recommendation that the Historical Commission recommend the entire ensemble of buildings and open space at Shady Hill Square to the City Council for designation as a landmark, regardless of the status of on-going private discussions or negotiations among the property owners over possible acquisition of lot 72. It is the further recommendation that the staff be directed to assist the property owners in their

efforts to secure long-term preservation of the open space of lot 72, if requested to do so by the owners. It is the further staff recommendation that, should a preservation or conservation solution for the long-term retention of lot 72 as open space be forthcoming, from whatever source, the terms of that solution be considered for amendment to any designation of Shady Hill Square as a landmark.

VII. Standards and Criteria

A. Introduction

Under Article III, the Historical Commission is charged with reviewing any construction, demolition or alteration that affects the exterior architectural features (other than color) of landmarks. This report describes exterior architectural features that are among the characteristics that led to consideration of Shady Hill Square as a landmark. Except as the order designating or amending the landmark may otherwise provide, the exterior architectural features described in this report should be preserved and/or enhanced in any proposed alteration or construction that affects those features of the landmark. The standards following in paragraphs B and C of this section provide specific guidelines for the treatment of the landmark described in this report.

B. General Standards and Criteria

Subject to review and approval of exterior architectural features under the terms of this report, the following standards shall apply:

1. Significant historic and architectural features of the landmark shall be preserved.
2. Changes and additions to the landmark, which have taken place over time, are evidence of the history of the property and the neighborhood. These changes to the property may have acquired significance in their own right and, if so, that significance should be recognized and respected.
3. Deteriorated architectural features should be repaired rather than replaced.
4. When replacement of architectural features is necessary, it should be based on physical or documentary evidence.
5. New materials should, whenever possible, match the material being replaced in physical properties, design, color, texture, and appearance. The use of imitation replacement materials is discouraged.
6. The surface cleaning of a landmark shall be done by the gentlest possible means. Sandblasting and other cleaning methods that damage exterior architectural features shall not be used.
7. New additions shall not destroy significant exterior architectural features and shall not be incongruous to the historic aspects, architectural significance, or distinct character of the landmark, neighborhood, and environment.
8. New additions should be done in a way that if they were to be removed in the future, the essential form and integrity of the landmark should be unimpaired.

C. Suggested Review Guidelines

1. Site

The center lot at Shady Hill Square (#72) should be maintained as open space. The space was intended in the original plan to be open and to provide a shared amenity for the residences in the development. While the ownership circumstances no longer reflect the communal nature the development had as a rental property, owned by a single entity, every effort should be made to achieve a preservation/conservation mechanism

that would re-establish lot 72 as a common amenity. To that end, the landscape treatment of lot 72 should remain open and informal, with a large lawn and associated tree plantings in a naturalistic arrangement. Fencing, formal arrangements of trees, and installation of flower beds and shrubbery should be avoided.

If, in the future, the commission finds that a building on lot 72 could be appropriate to the ensemble nature of Shady Hill Square, then such building should allow for retention of as much open space as possible, should be oriented to Holden Street and not extend beyond the rear walls of the properties at 1 Shady Hill Square and 36 Holden Street, and should reflect in its architecture the common elements so well preserved in the existing buildings of Shady Hill Square: 2½ story height, stucco exterior, slate roofs, double-hung wood windows, and Georgian Revival detailing.

The terms of the existing preservation restrictions (due to expire 12/31/2000) should be used as a guideline for landscape treatments at the residential properties of Shady Hill Square, e.g., fencing on individual properties should not exceed 2' in height and fencing and plantings should be low to allow views into and through the site to remain open and unimpeded.

The access road should remain unpaved and rustic. The development of parking at individual properties should be avoided.

2. Individual Properties

A significant aspect of the Shady Hill Square development is the extent to which the original character of the architecture has been preserved. Alterations that diverge from the original materials and design should be avoided. Additions to existing structures should reflect the terms of the existing preservation restriction and should not be made in side yard areas or closer to the driveway than the nearest point of the building on the lot.

VIII. Proposed Order

ORDERED:

That Shady Hill Square, including 1, 2A, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11 Shady Hill Square and 36 Holden Street be designated as a protected landmark pursuant to Chapter 2.78, Article III, Section 2.78.180 of the Code of the City of Cambridge, as recommended by vote of the Cambridge Historical Commission on January 6, 2000 and reconfirmed on October 5, 2000. The premises so designated are defined as parcels 65, 67, 71, 72, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144 of assessor's map 146A, and recorded as follows: 1 Shady Hill Square (book 21468, page 576), 2A Shady Hill Square (book 24880, page 339), 3 Shady Hill Square (book 16082, page 433), 4 Shady Hill Square (book 23646, page 144), 6 Shady Hill Square (book 26989, page 382), 7 Shady Hill Square (probate 88 D4637), 8 Shady Hill Square (book 13677, page 506), 9 Shady Hill Square (book 17268, page 011), 10 Shady Hill Square (book 23321, page 441), 11 Shady Hill Square (book 15848, page 174), and 36 Holden Street (book 12004, page 424).

This designation is justified by the significant associations of Shady Hill Square with the architectural, aesthetic, and social history of the City and the Commonwealth as one of a small number of innovative residential developments embodying the tenets of the Garden City movement. In Cambridge, Shady Hill Square is one of five known planned "Garden City" residential developments and one of two of the earliest local examples of such planning. To a great extent, Shady Hill Square retains its original appearance as a unified architectural design. It is historically and architecturally significant in terms of its period and style as an early 20th-century planned residential community.

The effect of this designation shall be that no construction activity can take place within the designated area, and no action can be taken affecting the appearance of Shady Hill Square, its buildings, or its landscape, that would in either case be visible from a public way, without review by the Cambridge Historical Commission and the issuance of a Certificate of Appropriateness, Hardship or Non-Applicability, as the case may be. In making determinations, the Commission shall be guided by the terms of Section VII, Standards and Criteria, and other applicable provisions of the Shady Hill Square Landmark Designation Study Report dated December 28, 1999 and as re-issued and dated August 28, 2000.

Appendix A (Zoning Analysis)

To: Shady Hill Landmark Designation Report
(Appendix A)

From: Sally Zimmerman

Re: Zoning Analysis

Date: December 22, 1999

On December 22, 1999, Lester Barber of the Planning Board staff, Cambridge Community Development Department confirmed the following items with regard to the development potential of the open space component of Shady Hill Square:

1. The private way constitutes a street for the purposes of the zoning ordinance.
2. The private way cannot be calculated as part of the center lot for purposes of determining the gross floor area permitted for any new construction.
3. All setbacks would be measured from the street's sidelines.
4. As a result of these requirements, the developable lot is 10,500 square feet, sufficient for a single house but too small to be subdivided into two lots.
5. A single house could be constructed on that lot with up to 5225 gross square feet contained within it.
6. A cursory inspection indicated that all setback requirements could be met by such a development, with all setbacks being 20 feet from all sides.